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December 28, 2010

APFO Advisory Committee
Department of Community Planning and Development Services
City of Rockville
111 Maryland Avenue
Rockville, Maryland 20850

Re: An open letter regarding APFO Advisory Committee startup

Dear Members of the APFO Advisory Committee:

As you undertake your appointed duties in 2011, I recommend some arrangements. Of course, if you collectively see this differently, please act on your own inclination—you are an independent body to insulate you from outside influences, including me. I seek here only to facilitate your start-up.

Someone needs to call the first meeting. In absence of other agreement, I nominate the first or second Thursday in January for your first meeting and will advise staff to canvas members on availability and act on most common date. At that first meeting, you should discuss your own structure and subsequent schedule. While at minimum you should set the next meeting time, deciding early on a regular meeting schedule would be good. Also, your resolution requires you to elect a chair-person, and the sooner this occurs the better. Yet you may want to defer this a little, to get to know the other members somewhat and determine who arises as a natural leader that can carry a consensus.

Staff will provide background materials and loosely discussing those, and matching interests in more detailed areas to pursue, might be good use of first meetings. As quickly as practical, you should identify further research or input activities you require of staff, so they have time to execute those and get any such yielded content into your deliberations before too late to meaningfully act on it.

To gain more background, I encourage you to follow the resolution suggestion of inviting expert or representative guests to work session meetings up front, to further inform yourself and gain insight from specialized knowledge. For general background on the APFO, I recommend Larry Giammo and John Hall as former Mayor and Council members that can describe original intent. On fire and safety aspects, Chief Dawson of the RVFD would be a good expert pick. For school capacity aspects, Bruce Crispell of MCPS and perhaps Laura Berthiaume of the Board of Education might be willing to testify to institutional facts and outlook of the

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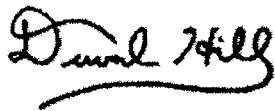
school system. For non-institutional perspective, PTSA officials are good references, especially among those in the Richard Montgomery HS cluster. On traffic aspects, consulting City transportation staff or meeting with the Traffic and Transportation Commission would be a good starting point. Residential citizens, development interests, and business owners might be other groups to represent in panels as experts. You have members among you that likely can select good representatives. And a public hearing near the outset of your activities would be a good opportunity to garner general citizen input, from those wishing to address this topic, and thereby bring aspects to your table that might not get voiced otherwise. Consultation with City commissions may be relevant. I suggest as likely relevant the Planning, Traffic and Transportation, and Environment Commissions and Board of Appeals. Lastly, I offer my procedural consultation at anytime in your proceedings, should you get stuck or wish advice. But you must invite that consultation; given my relationship with your appointing, I cannot inject in your proceedings beyond this letter.

The State Open Meetings Act applies to your activities. This requires that your scheduled meetings should be open to public observation. While a number of exceptions can be invoked to meet in closed session (such as to pursue legal counsel, or reviewing personnel matters), most of these do not apply to your presumed content. Consult with staff on questions or issues arising here, and the formal actions needed to be done.

When appointing this committee, we amended the constituting resolution with a timeframe for committee existence. This starts Jan. 2, 2011 and we wish you to report to us at our first meeting in July (13th), 2011. We purposefully leave the content and structure of that report open to your discretion on how best to communicate the sum of your recommendation(s).

As a final note, certain members of the public have requested open posting of APFO Committee applications. If you are willing to release your information, please call Jim Wasilak at 240-314-8211 or by email to jwasilak@rockvillemd.gov as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Hill", with a stylized flourish underneath.

David Hill

Planning Commission, Chair*

* As of Jan. 1, 2011, the chairmanship of the Planning Commission will pass to John Tyner. Formal communications with the Planning Commission should be addressed to Mr. Tyner in 2011.